

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, June 25, 1906, with transcript

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Beinn Bhreagh, near Baddeck, Nova Scotia. June 25, 1806,

You have probably been speculating why I did not come right on to Baddeck but stayed over one day in St. John. It was all on account of the amunt amount of baggage Charles gave me to look after. There was so much of i n t that I took a porter from the Parker House to help me get it checked at the baggage room in Boston. They had to weigh it to ascertain the excess on which to pa y so I wnet went on board the train leaving the porter in charge; it took them so long that the train moved off and I found myself en route for Baddeck without ticket or baggage. I telegraphed to the Parker to have the ticket and checks given to Elsie and arranged with the custom House official to send the baggage on to St. John in bend so that it could be bond so that it could be examin e d there, instead of at Vanceboro. I did not care to run the risk of going on to Baddeck without having the baggage examined, and so stayed over night at St. John. In the morning I found that Elsie's train was four and one half hours late, and could get no explanation of the delay until the Baggage Master whispered to me that there had been an accident to the train and that all that was known about it was contained in the morning papers; I then hunted up the St. John Sun and found that a loaded freight train had broken on an incline without the knowledge of the engineer, and that the rear cars had run backwards down the incline and come into collision with the Boston 3 Express smashing the engine, killing the engineer and fireman and shaking up the passengers pretty severely although none were reported as injured. The railroad men at St. John could give me information as the accident had happened in the I U nited States and n not on their lines, and all that they knew was that the train would be four and a half hours late. I was seriously disturbed about Elsie and the babies and sent a telegram to her down the line wherever the train might be. Of course

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I could not think of going on to Baddeck without knowing that Elsie was alright, nor did I want to frighten you by telegraphing anything about the accident, after about two hours of nervous wait one of the boys at the hotel discovered that the accident did not refer to our train at all.

The account was sent to the St. John paper from Manchester Connecticut, and the "Boston Express" was evidently a train running from Boston to Connecticut. This relieved my mind considerably and then came a reply from Elsie saying "That they were delayed by an accident to a freight train ahead of them and that they were alright. While I was waiting for Elsie's telegram I received a visit from a Mr. Brown the founder of the new school for the Deaf that has been opened near St. John, and a visit from Miss Bateman the principal teacher inviting me to visit the school and give advice concerning its future. I was too much disturbed about Elsie at the time to go but when she arrived I determined to let her go on to Truro and follow by the night train, as this would make no difference in the connections for Baddeck. It simply meant my spending the night on the train instead of at Truro. So I remained over, and visited the School and spent the evening with Mr. Brown and his family. From Bert's telegram to Elsie you have evidently been puzzling your brains as to the reasons why I remained in St. John instead of coming right through. I hope the above will make them clear. On reaching Beinn Bhreagh Elsie went at once to the Lodge and I went down to the Laboratory with Mr. Bedwin. I am very much pleased with the material he has accumulated for me. He has already made more than five thousand cells of the new pattern having metal corners, and half of them are covered. The new machinery for making the cells works well and expeditiously. He has a nice little motor already all ready for work upon the water but the copper floats which have been made in Boston have not yet arrived. They are expected every day. The house at the Point has been greatly improved in appearance by the new porch and the port co s c her? is fine. Miss McCurdy has been here for a couple of days and Douglas and Mr. Baldwin have come over from town. I am very much pleased with the appearance of Mr. Baldwin and think it very likely I may make some arrangements with him. I

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have had no conversation with him yet upon the subject but should I find him capable of taking up the question of reinforced concrete I think it might be worth while having him conduct experiments with steel structures. 5 Everything looks very beautiful here but we are roughing it at present on account of absence of help. Maggie is here and the new cook has arrived. The other girl has not come as Mr. McInnis thought it best she should remain away just now on account of the presence of chicken pox in her family. The weather has been cold and damp and in spite of my thick overcoat I have caught cold in my back and my right knee reminds me of old days. I tumbled into bed early last night but forgot to close the doors into the morning room with the usual result so I have been keeping quietly in bed to-day and this evening I am quite upset by the discovery that the special valise containing all my papers and records is not here, Elsie reports by telephone that it is not at the Lodge and I am quite disturbed about it. Mr. Cox came over from town to help me answer some important letters but they also are in that unfortunate valise so that I cannot do more to-night than write a few words to you. The children were very good on the train but were looking rather pale on their arrival here especially the baby but Elsie reports that they are all well to-day and happy and that Mabel actually has some color in her cheeks. she is a beautiful baby and as sweet as can be. She looks at least twice as large as she did when she left Washington. They seem to be quite comfortable at the Lodge. The lambs look fine; I examined the eight-nippled fellow last night and this evening saw the Ewe-Lamb that has presented us with twins. Though the mother is only a lamb herself she has taken good care of both her babies without assistance and they seem as fine as the other lambs. I understand that Mrs. McInnis has returned home and Mr. McInnis simply reports that she is "no worse."

McDermid is here and will take this letter over in the morning to mail.

Douglas McCurdy and Mr. Baldwin, knowing how much troubled I was about the missing Valise, slipped out in the rain and the fog and rowed over to Baddeck in search of it,

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though late at night they reached out the Captain and the steamboat — got the key of the boat — went on board — and found the valise.

It is now passed midnight — and they were just come in — wet and dripping — but triumphant. Mr. Cox has tumbled out of bed and is now on hand to answer the letters — so as to catch the morning mail. It is a comfort to have such willing helpers to rely upon.

Goodnight — I am glad you did not come, for it is raw and chilly here and you better get well first before subjecting yourself to such a change of climate. We bought some warm things for Melville and Gertrude in Truro so they have not suffered at all. Baby Mabel did not require any extra things. Glad you were able to be with your mother — at least for a few days. Make haste and get well — for I am lonely without you. With much love

Your own Alec.

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. Sunday, June 25, 1906. Mrs. A. Graham Bell, Twin Oaks, Woodley Lane, Washington, D. C. My sweet darling little wife:

How are you — and what does the doctor say. It is just as well that you returned to Washington — for the change of climate is too great for you in your present condition.

I am distracted, however, to be so far away from you at the present time. I had quite made up my mind to wait for you but could not resist your telegraphic appeals and so I am here. Mr. Cox is on hand and I will dictate to him what I have to say about my visit to St. John but the beginning and the end of this note will be in MY OWN HANDWRITING .

You have probably been speculating why I did not come right on to Baddeck but stayed over one day in St. John. It was all on account of the amount of baggage Charles gave me to look after. there was so much of it that I took a porter from the Parker House to help me get it checked at the baggage rom in Boston. They had to weigh it to ascertain the

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